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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing academic growth through motivating students to read. The targeted population includes kindergarten, first, third, and high school special education students. The lack of motivation in reading was documented through data revealed by pre-surveys and post-surveys of students' interest in books. Analysis of probable cause data reveals that reading performance could be affected by lack of parental involvement, accessibility to a public library, and the value of books in the students' home. Students from low-income families lack appropriate book and reading materials in their home. A review of literature solutions states results in the selection of several categories of intervention. In order to determine the effects of the intervention, teachers kept records that tracked reading logs, grades, journals, participation, and parent involvement. Comparisons of the results of the pre-test and post-test intervention surveys provide an insight to changes of student attitudes towards reading. Students demonstrated a slight improvement in their enjoyment of reading. The motivation of students is greatly affected by the support at home. (Contains 44 references and 4 tables of data. Three appendixes contain the following: the student reading survey; an Individual Story Conference Form; and an observation checklist.) (PM)

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INCREASING ACADEMIC GROWTH THROUGH MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO READ

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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing academic growth through motivating students to read. The targeted population included, Kindergarten, first, third and high school special education students. The lack of motivation in reading was documented through data revealed by presurvey and postsurveys of students' interest in books and what the strategies attribute toward reading.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that reading performance could be affected by lack of parental involvement, accessibility to a public library and if books were valued in the students' home. Students from low-income families lack appropriate book and reading materials in their home. Probable cause data also indicated that the lack of parental involvement and students low academic performance were major concerns for the problem.

A review of literature solution states results in the selection of several categories of intervention. In order to try to determine the effects of the intervention, teacher records will keep track of reading logs, grades, journals, participation, and parent involvement.

Comparisons of the results of the pretest and posttest intervention surveys were made to provide an insight to changes of student attitudes towards reading. Students demonstrated a slight improvement in their enjoyment of reading. The motivation of students is greatly affected by the support at home.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Problem Statement

The targeted elementary and secondary students exhibited a lack of motivation in reading, which interfered with their academic growth. Evidence for the existence of the problem included anecdotal records that documented lack of parent involvement, student surveys, and assessments that indicated students' performance.

Local Context

School A was located in northeastern Illinois in a residential neighborhood with 1,300 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Due to overcrowding there were two buildings, one primary and one intermediate. There was one principal and one assistant principal for both buildings. Faculty members included 40 classroom teachers with an average of 14 years experience. Forty-five percent of the teachers had a master's degree.

The ethnic composition of School A included 90% Hispanic, 7% African-American, and 1% Caucasian. Ninety-seven percent of the students were from low-income families, and 32% were limited-English-proficient. School A averaged 25 students per classroom, had a 98% attendance rate, and a 23% mobility rate.

The extra programs offered included a free breakfast and lunch, after school tutoring, bilingual classes, Rochelle Lee Reading Grant, Whirlwind Arts Lab, choir, band, various athletics, science club, computer club, homework help, science fair, spelling and geography bees, student council, Young Authors, summer school, special monthly informational parent meetings, and training for parents in English-as-a-second language (ESL). School A was also recognized by the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE).

The following areas were targeted for improvement: safety and security issues before, during, and after school; the physical condition of the intermediate building; lack of substitute teachers; and proper wiring for Internet access in the primary building.

School B was located in West Central Illinois in a residential neighborhood with more than 2,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth. It was a branch school that opened due to overcrowding at the main school. The teachers had an average of about eight years experience. Two percent of the teachers had master's degrees. The faculty members consisted of an administrator and 10 full time teachers. The support staff included three parent-aides.

The ethnic composition of School B included 45.7% African American, 49.4% Hispanic, 4.2% Caucasian, 0.7% Asian, and 0.1% Native American. Ninety-two percent of the students were categorized as low income and 23.4% were limited-English-proficient. The student mobility rate had declined from a high of 44.7% in 1990 to 27.4% in 1999. The grade levels covered in School B were kindergarten through third grade. The ages of the students were five years to nine years of age. The school

averaged about 25 students per classroom, due to the sizes of the rooms, and about 200 students in all.

The extra programs offered included a free breakfast and lunch program, after school tutoring, athletics, art program, bilingual program, computer program, enrichment, full service initiative, International Baccalaureate (IB), Middle Years Program (MYP), science fair, special education program, spelling bee, student council, summer school, Success For All (SFA) reading program, targeted assistance/class size reduction, Young Heroes, and Young Authors.

The areas targeted for improvement included a common reading series to be used by all faculty and students that allowed all grade levels to have a common base of future building blocks for reading, classroom libraries needed in order for each child to meet his/her full reading potential, and overcrowding in the classrooms due to the physical layout of the building, since the enrollment had increased over the years and created a need for additional classroom space.

School C was located in a south suburb of Chicago. School C was a private school that was founded in 1910 and developed and grew as a parochial school within the confines of the church community. The ethnic composition of the school was 100% Caucasian and all the students were of Orthodox religion.

The grade levels covered in School C were kindergarten through eighth grades. The ages of the students were four years old to fourteen years old. School C had a total of about 250 students. The average number was about 25 students per class. The income level of the parents varied due to the fact that the students lived in many different

communities and commuted to school driven by their parents. On average, 95% of the students were in attendance on a daily basis.

The faculty consisted of 12 full time and 6 part time teachers and a full time aide. The school had one administrator, two priests, two pastoral assistants, and two support staff. The average years of teaching experience was 10 years. Twenty-five percent of the teachers had master's degrees, and 75% had bachelor's degrees.

The extra activities and enrichment programs offered at school C included fine arts seminars, Greek architecture seminars, student council, National Junior Honor Society, fire safety program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (D.A.R.E.), bank program, geography bee, spelling bee, math counts, science fair, law day, essay contest, career day, Great Books, electronic bookshelf, cheerleading, chorus, basketball, and mathematics and science clubs.

Volunteerism and community involvement were widespread throughout the community. These included fire fighters, scouts, summer bible camp, celebration groups, volunteer tutors, family mathematics night, and cultural arts programs.

The school day consisted of 8 classes that were 40 minutes in length, with a lunch period. The courses that students were required to take were spelling, handwriting, mathematics, English, reading, social studies, religion, foreign language, music, art, and computers. The primary goals were to promote intellectual development, reinforce cultural awareness, build social responsibility, and integrate the moral and ethical awareness of their faith.

The issues and concerns were that the class size for some of the grades was quite large. For example the kindergarten class there were 33 students. It was very difficult to

teach reading to those students due to the class size and also the range of years from 4 years of age to 6 years of age.

Another issue was parent volunteers. These parent volunteers at School C were the same people who spent time helping out at school yet would not spend time at home helping their own children.

School D was located in the South Suburbs of Chicago. On its opening day in September 1950, School D welcomed 330 freshman, sophomores, and juniors. Fifty years later, about 1,600 students were enrolled in the ninth through twelfth grade, with the average class size of 21 students. The major racial-ethnic groups in School D were about 86% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% Native American. About 7% of the students in School D came from low-income families, and about 3% were limited-English-proficient. The dropout rate for School D was about 4%, and the graduation rate was about 86%. School D spent an average of $10,600 per student.

The targeted high school consisted of 99 classroom teachers, 10 administrators, 4 deans, 5 guidance counselors, a psychologist, 2 social workers, a speech pathologist, and 5 full-time aides. Of the 99 classroom teachers, about 99% were Caucasian. About 51% of these teachers were male, and about 49% of these teachers were female. The average teaching experience of the classroom teachers was about 17 years. About 35% of the teachers had their bachelor's degree, and about 70% of the teachers had their master's degree. The average teacher's salary of School D was about $71,000.

The campus included: 132 classrooms, 6 computer labs and science labs, a 18,000 square-foot nationally acclaimed library, which housed about 43,000 volumes, 3

gymnasiums, a spacious auditorium, a lighted football field, several baseball diamonds, an all-weather track, a complete automotive workshop, a state-of-the-art tech center, and extensive fine arts facilities.

The mission at School D was to educate students to be productive, responsible American citizens who, through continual learning, could participate effectively in a global society. The faculty and staff enabled students to realize their potential by offering curricular and extra curricular programs that nurture intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, and moral development. School D was dedicated to educational opportunity, committed to excellence, and engaged in a partnership with the community that fosters pride through example.

The faculty and staff members of School D realized the importance of parental involvement in education. School D, in partnership with the parents and the community, was committed to prepare its students to meet the challenges of the ever-changing world. The curriculum was at the center of that commitment. The school day at School D consisted of seven 55-minute periods and a 25-minute period additional academic assistance period at the end of the day, to be used as needed. The students in School D were able to choose courses in business, English, family and consumer sciences, fine arts, music, foreign language, mathematics, physical education, health, driver education, science, social studies, and technology education. There were a wide variety of programs such as honors/gifted, special education, language development, learning labs, study halls, academic homerooms, peer tutoring, and alternative education to assist in meeting the needs of each student.

Community Context

School A was located in one of six regions that make up the third-largest school district in the country. Within the vicinity of the school lay nine other public and private schools, one of them a high school. As a whole, the entire region consisted of 123 public schools. The total enrollment for the region was 79,000 students.

The average experience of the teachers was 15 years, with 45% at a master's degree level. Like all schools in the region, School A had an emphasis on reading and math. The student to teacher ratio was 22:1.

The schools of the region faced many issues on a year round basis: security, funding, academic achievement, standardized test scores, and parent involvement. Student and staff safety remained a concern for the school district. Lack of funding for security guards added to the problem. A large percentage of the schools in the district were close to being on academic probation due to the low achievement test scores in reading and math. Lack of parent participation in their children's education may have contributed to the low-test scores.

School A was situated in a predominantly low-income Hispanic residential neighborhood with 65% single-family homes and 35% multifamily homes. The population consisted of 38,000 with a median age of 33 for the residents and a median family income of $52,000. The median years of school completed was twelve.

A total of 56% of the residents were employed, 7% were unemployed, and 37% were not in the labor force. The various occupational fields included administrative support, technicians, managerial, and factory workers.

The community issues and concerns were gangs and graffiti. The community established the Southwest Neighbors Against Gangs (SNAG) and Community Affiliation for Repairs for the Elderly (C.A.R.E.) to help with handling these issues. SNAG provided the community with a sense of peace by standing up to gangs. There were fewer gangbangers on corners and graffiti was down. C.A.R.E. assisted elderly and disabled residents with free minor home repairs.

School B was located in a residential neighborhood with more than 2,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth. The multicultural student body was reflective of the community and consisted of 45.7% African-American; 49.4% Hispanic; 4.2% Caucasian; 0.7% Asian; and 0.1% Native American. Ninety-two percent of the students were categorized as low income and 23.4% were limited-English-proficient. The student mobility rate had declined from a high of 44.7% in 1990 to 27.4% in 1999. The school had partnerships with Metropolitan Family Services and the Olivé Branch Mission and received student teacher interns through a partnership with the Olive Branch Mission. A regular partnership with Saint Xavier University for student teachers had been established. The principal actively participated in the Southwest Community Congress. Other community members and organizations participated in activities at school B and were sponsored by the Full Service Initiative. Eighty-two percent of the students' parents/guardians had personal contact with the school staff during the school year.

The ITBS scores showed that 33.5% of students in grades 3-8 tested scored at or above national norms in reading. Reading scores increased each year since 1995 when 23.0% were at or above national norms. The main academic focus was to continue to improve reading grades.

The school district had faced issues that were reflective on the community. Some of these issues were a lack of security in the school that allowed for only one crossing guard. The school was located on a main street that caused safety issues for the children and staff. There was a lack of space for parents to park when they picked up their children.

The community in which School C was located was approximately 18 miles southwest of Chicago and was 5 square miles in area. The population was just over 18,000 with about 77% living in single-family units and 22% living in multifamily units.

The community provided a local library, several banks, several restaurants, a doctor's office, a local dentist, a complete police and fire department, and 10 churches. It also had a municipal golf course, a nearby winter sports area, and a commuter rail system to Chicago.

The number of households was 7,000. Most of the homes were built in the 1970s and many of those homes consisted of 5 rooms per house. The reported ancestry was German and Irish, with 93% of the race distribution for the community being Caucasian.

There was one high school district, two elementary school districts, one community college, and two private schools. The two private schools were under the jurisdiction of one of the elementary school districts; however the two private schools did not follow the criteria from that elementary school district. The median years of school completed was 13. Thirty percent of the population had completed high school and 22% had completed some college.

The community issues and concerns about School C were to maintain the schools' ethnic composition. This was becoming more and more difficult, since more than 70% of the population of the parents whose children attended School C were of mixed marriages.

Another concern was to the physical layout of the building and since the enrollment had increased over the years, there was a lack of appropriate space for classes. The primary grades especially were most at risk with overcrowding.

The community in which School D was located was 10 square miles in the southwest suburbs of Chicago. Low taxes and local shopping spurred growth in this small town adjoining a major city. At the time of this research, there were about 9,035 houses in this community. Most of the households were built in the 1950s and the 1960s. About 83% of these houses were single-family units, and about 17% were multifamily units. In 1999, 335 homes were sold, and the average selling price was about $13,000.

Of the 27,560 residents, about 49% were male and about 51% were female. The approximate ethnic backgrounds of these residents include 21% Polish, 17% German, 17% Irish, 9% Italian, 5% Hispanic, and 3% Arab. Almost 26% of the residents in this community were never married, 57% were married with their spouse present, 3% were married with their spouse absent, 9% were widowed, and 6% were divorced.

Approximately 63% of the members of this community were employed, 3% were unemployed, and about 33% were not in the labor force. Of the employed residents, about 21% were administrative support, 17% were managers or professionals, 17% were craft or repair, 12% were service, 7% worked in factories, 6% worked in transportation, and about 6% were helpers or laborers.

Of the 18 and older population of this community, about 12% had less than a ninth grade education, about 18% had some secondary education, almost 41% were high school graduates, and about 17% had some college. Almost 5% of those who attended college had an associate's degree, about 6% had a bachelor's degree, and almost 2% had obtained a master's degree.

The community had two public school districts. One school district was made up of seven elementary/junior high schools, and the other school district was the high school. There was also one Roman Catholic grammar school, and two Roman Catholic high schools.

Besides the many school buildings, the community also had many facilities to meet the needs of the residents. Within the 10 square miles of this town there were 13 churches, a health care facility, a police department, a fire department, a public library, a community swimming pool, two recreation centers, and 13 parks.

Involving the community in the education system was a major concern of the school district. The belief was that when the school and community work as partners in learning, positive outcomes could evolve and benefit everyone. The school emphasized good citizenship and community service, which are two important components of a successful life. The faculty and staff wanted their students to be better citizens, which also involved giving back to the community at local and national levels. Teaching the students the importance of having a positive partnership with the community will lead them to more rewarding lives, while benefiting the world around them.

National Context of the Problem

Increasing motivation is critical to students' academic growth. How an individual achieves success that merits concern. Although it is a national concern, research has shown that motivation to read has not been studied or discussed to the level that more cognitive aspects of reading have (Wigfield & McCann, 1997).

Lack of motivation affects all readers; regardless of their ability to read. Many students know reading as only school or work-related because of how reading is taught and acquired in classrooms. Turner (1992) reported that students maybe reluctant to read due to the following factors: a lack of interest, a lack of appropriate materials, previous failures in reading, inappropriate instruction, lack of values on the importance of reading, and a non-reading environment in both school and home. No matter what the reading level of the students, there are many factors that may contribute to a lack of motivation.

Aspects of motivation include intrinsic and extrinsic motives and values for learning. Intrinsic motivation comes from within and extrinsic motivation comes from external influences, such as relationships with teachers, parents, and peers. Both types of motivation can increase children's reading. One student may show strong intrinsic motivation to read. This student reads avidly in class, always keeping a book by his side when there is time in classroom activities for independent work. In contrast, another student is more extrinsically motivated to read. This student will only read when others around him are reading or when he is in a group. When the support of peers is removed, the student's productivity level may drop off (Wigfield & McCann, 1997).

Every day teachers encounter both capable and poor readers who simply will not read due to their attitudes about reading. Teachers cannot always control external distractions from reading such as television, video games, or movies (Arthur & Burch, 1993). This problem is a universal concern in society. Motivation is a key to reading.

Morrow and Sharkey (1993) found that literature-based programs have become a component for literacy instruction, although the challenge still remains to produce not only competent readers, but also students who are interested in reading for pleasure or information. There are different dimensions of children's motivations for reading, and these different dimensions relate to how often children read. "Without motivation, even the brightest student may learn little in the classroom and will not become engaged in classroom activities" (Wigfield & McCann, 1997, p.360).

CHAPTER 2

Problem Evidence

Teaching children to read is a key element in educational success and should be an important priority. Students' lack of motivation to read in the targeted elementary and secondary schools interfered with their academic growth. Educators should capture every opportunity to entice students to realize the enjoyment and value of reading.

Three types of data sources were used to document the problem that students in the targeted schools generally lacked a motivation to read. The students in the targeted schools were given surveys and reading assessments. Anecdotal records, which included observation checklists, were also used to collect the necessary data.

The main goal of the student surveys was to see how the targeted students felt about reading, and to see if their feelings had changed after the project. The surveys focused on the accessibility of reading material and reading involvement with peers, parents or guardians.

The assessment activity was an individual story conference form given to the students after reading a story. The students were required to answer questions about the story title, characters, main idea, and their favorite part of the story. The main goal of

this assessment was to see if the students' reading skills had improved after the completion of this research project.

The observation checklist was done twice by the teachers to check on the following targeted skills: following written text, on-task during reading, weekly reading logs signed, participation during reading, and completion of journals. Each student was rated as frequently, sometimes, or not yet for each of these targeted skills.

Table 1.

Percent of Positive Responses Given on the Student Survey of Reading Perception

Questions	Positive Responses
Enjoys Reading	72
Is Reading Easy	51
Library Card	49
Use of Public Library	51
Are Books Important	76
Special Time for Reading	67
Comprehend Material	60
Remember What Someone Read To You	76
Are Books Available	69
Improvement of Reading in Past Year	67

n = 130 total students

The first form of data collection was a presurvey. This survey was given to targeted kindergarten, first, third, and high school students. Results indicated in Table 1 that a majority of the targeted students answered "yes" to most of the survey questions.

After analyzing the data, it was clear that about half of the targeted students did not have a library card or use the library. Out of the 130 total students, 51% of these students found reading to be difficult.

The second form was the reading assessment. The assessment indicated that 55% of the students scored about 50%. The other 45% of the students had a more difficult time with the assessment and scored a 50% or lower.

Table 2.

Percentage of the Tasks on the Pre-observation Checklist

Questions	Responses Frequent	Sometimes	Not Yet
Following Written Text	63	44	23
On Task During Reading	54	54	30
Weekly Reading Logs Signed	76	28	26
Participation During Reading	58	46	26
Completion of Journals	66	36	38

n = 130 students

The third form of data collection was the observation checklist. The results of this observation checklist are described in table 2. The results showed that the majority of the targeted students were frequently performing the tasks being observed by the researchers. Although there was a small percentage of students who have not yet mastered the above mentioned tasks a majority of the targeted students frequently succeeded in all of the tasks.

Probable Causes

There are several causes the lack of motivation to read to increase academic growth. Many students entered the targeted schools from low-income families, there was a lack of parental involvement in the schools, and many students exhibited low academic performance.

Researchers have suggested several underlying causes for motivating students to read to increase academic growth. Wheaton and Kay (1999) suggested a program called "1,000 Days to Success" to ensure 100% literacy in elementary schools. Schools participating in this program reported that every child who entered kindergarten would learn to read by the end of second grade. The schools involved implemented an uninterrupted morning literacy block. They maximized their instructional time. There is no single curriculum or program that teaches every child to read, but the approach was to provide available resources that could be useful. The teachers, parents, and students all need to do their part. Teachers need to come together and share successful strategies, staff development ideas, and resources that foster an environment where success is the norm for every student.

According to Rimm (1997), if students are not working up to their ability in school, then they are underachieving. Many underachievers are intelligent, but they do not know how to be productively intelligent and their performance levels maybe low. Adults need to listen to and watch for children's messages and provide them with appropriate direction. It is easier for children to learn appropriate behaviors, like enjoying reading, if they are provided with effective models to imitate. Parents and

teachers need to work together as a team to respect each other and the education system, in order for productive teaching and learning to take place.

Wigfield and Mccann (1997) stated that each child has a different dimension for being motivated to read. These dimensions include reading efficacy, reading curiosity, and reading topics. Teachers must nurture children's sense that they can read and build on the students' own interests and curiosity about different topics.

In order for children to be great readers, they need to be exposed to an environment by great numbers of books and a variety of vocabularies. Reading strategies, like using children's classic literature, presenting literacy activities with various themes, and increasing higher-order thinking, contribute to the increase in children's love for reading. A 1989 research summary by Tunnell and Jacobs showed reoccurring achievement gains among students of various socioeconomic backgrounds in these literature-based programs.

Teachers, can help students make the connections to literacy. According to Laminack (2000), reading aloud, having predictable books, using attendance or sign-in sheets, a display of children's work in the classroom, big books, paper bag books, cereal box books, and labeling the room with sentence patterns will help give students confidence in their beginning reading and writing performance.

According to Carbo (1997), educators need to be sure that students learn to read easily and to enjoy reading more when the instructional techniques match their learning styles. Educators need to provide a comfortable and relaxing environment and to give their students a wide range of challenging reading material.

Williams and Woods (1997) contended that educators make decisions every day about curriculum content and instructional strategies that affect the academic success of their students. These decisions greatly influence the degree to which students will succeed in what is being taught in the curriculum.

Influences from the home, school, and the community help to shape students' learning. Students develop in-school learner experiences through interactions with formal curricula, assessment rules, and other cultural aspects in the school. The students develop outside of school experiences through daily life separate from school activities. Information about student's out-of-school experiences can begin with an interview. This information can help make connections between the students' knowledge and their experiences. The educator needs to help students understand how this knowledge and these experiences can relate to the curriculum.

The approach is to provide every resource that can be available to the educator, as well as, to the parent. Parents and educators need to provide effective models to display the enjoyment of reading so that all children will understand that the necessity of reading is not only for information, but also for the pleasure.

CHAPTER 3

Literature Review

For the purpose of this research, increasing academic growth is defined in terms of motivating students to have a positive attitude towards reading. Everything educators can do to help students develop positive behaviors and attitudes will give educators a distinct teaching advantage (DeBruyn, 2001). In order for students to have positive attitudes, it is up to the educator to be positive and create a positive climate and culture in the classroom.

In general terms, students' motivation is defined as students' willingness, need, and eagerness to participate in, and succeed in, the learning process (Skinner & Belmont, as cited in Brewster & Fager, 2000). Students who are less motivated do not try hard; they give up, or may be inactive. Maintaining high motivation and participation in learning have been connected to reduced dropout rates and raised levels of student success (Blank, 1997; Dev, 1997; Kushman, 2000; Woods, 1995). Yet, year after year, teachers are faced with the challenge to keep students interested and motivated in learning. This challenge increases as the students grow older, and more factors, such as peer pressure, contribute to the lack of motivation and interest in school. Many factors contribute to the interest and engagement of students' learning.

Teachers understand that they cannot control all these factors, and that not all students are motivated by the same values, needs, wants, or desires. Unfortunately there is no single answer or magical formula to motivate students. Research has shown that good everyday teaching practices can do more to affect student motivation than special efforts to attack motivation directly (Ericksen, 1978).

Student motivation involves enthusiasm, need, ambition, and compulsion to engage in and succeed in the learning process (as cited in Brewster & Fager 2000). suggested that the definition should include the students' ability to pick tasks that coincide with their abilities and initiate their own learning, and that students' emotions should display enthusiasm, curiosity, and interest during ongoing learning. It is important to help students set realistic and achievable goals for themselves because failure to meet goals may disappoint and aggravate students. Motivated students meet challenges and can often deal with challenging situations. Less motivated learners can often be inactive, put little effort into the task, and quit easily when faced with challenges. These less motivated learners may be the students who will need extra assistance and encouragement in the classroom.

Student motivation naturally has to do with students' desire to succeed in the learning process. Many students can be equally motivated to perform a task (Lepper, 1988). To encourage students to become more self-motivated, independent learners, educators should give positive feedback on a regular basis, aid students in finding personal meaning and value in the material, and provide various opportunities for student success and responsibility in the classroom (Lowman, 1984). A strong and positive

classroom environment can encourage and promote greater motivation and productivity (Reiger & Stang, 2000).

Educators must help students sense that they can read and build on their own interest and curiosity about different topics through books that are available for them to read. Students' reading is best enhanced through successful experiences. Having students pick their own choices of reading topics and materials is an important way to stimulate their interests and curiosity through reading (Schunk, 1991).

Student motivation is often divided into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic (Brewster & Fager, 2000). Extrinsic motivation involves learning for the sake of receiving a reward or avoiding punishment. Working toward a reward or avoiding consequences seldom yields more than the minimum effort from the student. Thus, there is a reduction of interest to master skills, which diminishes the likelihood of those skills being retained for the future. Intrinsically motivated students feel the motivation to learn within themselves. These students actively seek learning out of curiosity, interest, or enjoyment. No reward or incentive is needed to initiate learning. Intrinsically motivated students have often been found to earn higher grades and achievement test scores to use different strategies to help understand information. These students feel more confident about themselves because their motivation comes from within. These students pick more challenging tasks and may be more likely to complete tasks than extrinsically motivated students, and may retain skills and information longer without the need for remedial review. Intrinsically motivated students become lifelong learners.

Encouraging suggestion in dealing with student motivation include:

- Rewards for extrinsic motivation should be used sparingly.

- Classroom expectations for achievement and behavior must be made clear.
- Teachers should be consistent with their expectations.
- Teachers need to welcome and support students, taking time to get to know them.
- Educators need to create a quality relationship with students, especially those students who would be at-risk.
- Teachers should reply positively to questions students may ask, and praise them.
- Large tasks should be broken down into a series of smaller goals to prevent students from becoming overwhelmed and discouraged.
- Mastery of the skills needs to be promoted by the teacher. If students at first succeed, provide more opportunities for them to try.
- Students' work should be measured as soon as possible, and give clear feedback. Base the evaluation on the task, not comparing students (Brewster, & Fager, 2000 p.6).

Many children today are in trouble because their environments have affected to their development (Garbarino, 1997). Children are more exposed to the negative influences of an increasing uncaring environment. Unless something is done, the conditions for children will continue to worsen. Students' home experiences shape the initial attitudes they develop toward learning. When students are raised with a nurturing of self-worth, they may more readily accept the risks of learning. Motivation to learn is acquired through experiences, but can be stimulated directly through modeling and by direct teaching of teachers and parents (Brophy, 1986).

Many parents would like to protect their children from undesirable reading material, but they may not be able to stop them from examining other media messages. Students must learn to make reliable decisions about their media choices.

In today's society, the children need social and emotional learning opportunities. Research by Cummings and Haggerty (1997) indicated that teaching social and emotional skills may have a long-term positive effect on academic achievement and many students may experience fewer problems in the future.

Most educators collect and use information about students' in-school experiences, but there are many variations in what teachers are able to find out about students' outside-of-school experiences (Williams & Woods, 1997). Teachers need to be able to identify with their students and realize how their outside influences are affecting them in the classroom. It is often difficult for teachers to understand or discover the daily experiences of a child outside of school because of the lack of communication and interaction between parents and teachers.

Lyon (1999) reported that one reason for the discrepancy between children's ability to learn and their levels of reading difficulty is that many students did not receive effective instructions. Helping all children to learn how to read is complex, and teachers, guardians, and parents play significant roles in developing motivation in reading. The more often children fail in reading, the less motivated they may be to continue struggling to learn to read. Hirsch, Jr. (2001) reported that outside assistance is available for families, but parents may lack the awareness that it exists.

All children can learn, but if they are motivated they may be more successful in school. When students' reading styles are accommodated and a learning styles

environment is created, most children can learn to read. Things such as noise, lighting, temperature, design of the classroom, sociological stimuli, perception centers, and mobility need to be taken into consideration. Providing classical music while students are working, dimming the fluorescent lights for light sensitive students, having a comfortable environment, providing various group interactions, and including multiple intelligences into the lessons could aid in improving the learning environment (Hodgin & Woolescroft, 1997). When a positive environment is created, it is easier for students to succeed because they feel more comfortable, less stressed, and find learning more pleasurable.

In order to read, educators and parents have to train the brain to function in ways it was not naturally made to work. Humans acquire the ability to do many things that they were born not knowing how to do. Children have to increase their awareness that words are made up of sounds, and print represents these sounds. When children reach this level, they are capable of learning how to read. This process of awareness varies from child to child (D'Arcangelo, 1999).

A brain-based program establishes a safe, nurturing environment where students develop their knowledge, locate patterns, make connections, and learn to take risks. Incorporating the latest neurological research into the school's instruction and curriculum to accommodate the learning styles of children and their learning differences has improved teaching and learning in the school system (Wagmeister & Shifrin, 2000).

Active parent involvement has been linked with a number of benefits for students, including increasing student motivation and participation in school (Patton, 1994). Getting parents involved in homework may have a positive impact on children's learning. Parents need to understand what role the teacher expects them to play. Teachers need to

be clear with parents about what kinds of involvement are actually profitable to students. To help students be successful with work at home and at school, parents can:

- Create a place at home that is conducive to studying.
- Set aside a specific time for homework each day.
- Make sure students have all of the supplies they need.
- Be available if students have questions.
- Make an effort to communicate regularly with teachers.
- Avoid linking reward or punishments to school performance (Brewster & Fager 2000, p.12)

Research by Fitch-Blanks (2001) indicated that programs and practices may be more beneficial when homework is presented school-wide rather than classroom by classroom, when teachers and parents communicate daily on homework and personal issues, and when parents feel at ease in approaching teachers with questions. Parents are often stressed, but they need to realize the importance of active involvement in their children's everyday lives.

The advantage of parents reading to their children has been acknowledged and strongly endorsed by research. More than a decade ago, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985) reported that shared book reading was one of the most significant activities for developing the process needed for ultimate success in reading. The more frequently shared reading occurs, the better the child's readiness for reading. Limited reading activities within the home often has a negative effect on eventual reading achievement (Raz & Bryant, 1990).

There are many factors to take into account for the success of reading. Socioeconomic status of families, educational level of parents, second language in the home, number of children in the family, and single parenting must be taken into consideration. In a study by Yarosz and Barnett (2001) the United States Department of Education 1995 National Household Education Survey (NHES:95) was used to identify predicators of reading activities within the family. They concluded that the educational level and number of children in the family are much stronger factors in reading to children than income. The lower the number of siblings in the household, the more frequent the interaction between parent and child. The higher the education a parent has, the more they read to their children every day.

According to Nidds and McGerald (1999), adults enhance children's chances of success in school by reading everyday. Children internalize a sense of value when an adult takes the time to read to them. Furnishing the opportunity to show a child different applications of prior knowledge, enhancing vocabulary, and developing language patterns will provide the child with the social and cognitive tools needed to be successful in school. Vygotsky (as cited in Nidds & McGerald, 1999) believed that interaction between children and intelligent adults is important for early learners. Freud (as cited in Nidds & McGerald, 1999) theorized that children have an ideal time to learn when they are capable of understanding material in a natural, satisfying experience. Any child who was first taught after this critical moment has missed the cognitive requirements for learning and rarely learns well. The early shared reading experience increases the child's acquisition of the prerequisites for formal reading instruction.

Success in reading in the primary grades is critical to children's present and future academic career. Effective early intervention has helped students that have had difficulty reading. Two important factors in acquiring early proficient reading are word recognition and fluency. According to Rasinski (1995), supplementary and preventive directional efforts needed to improve word recognition and fluency of young readers offer great potential for helping these students become proficient readers. The amount of support and instruction given by a teacher within the classroom is not enough . Additional support is needed, and that can be provided from home through parental involvement. A recent report concluded that students who experienced literacy based interaction within their families exhibited higher levels of reading achievement than those students who had little or no such interaction (Rasinski, 1995).

Despite the importance of parental involvement, implementing a program for long duration within the schools has proven to be difficult. Usually set up as an occasional activity during the school year, parents are provided with the opportunity to hear local experts, go to workshops, and experience short term incentive programs. Other factors for the low parental involvement have been lack of time, constant school support, lack of motivation and ability of the parents, and parents' unwillingness to take responsibility for instructing their children.

Rasinski (1995) identified a set of principles that may help teachers develop a lasting effective parental involvement. These principles include:

- Teachers should develop instructional activities for parents based on effective strategies for promoting growth in reading.

- Teachers need to make the instructional activities simple, short, and easy to use.
- The program should furnish parents with support, constant communication and follow-up training.
- Developers should make sure that the activities are reading based with authentic texts and materials for parents.
- Educators should make parents accountable for their work by providing materials to document their progress.
- Activities should be consistent and planned for the entire school year.
- Parents should provide positive encouragement and reinforcement

(p 306)

Rasinski, in the Fast Start Parental Involvement Program in Reading, followed these principles in an informal instructional program that parents found motivational, easy to implement, and time efficient. The purpose of this program was to provide long term, effective strategies through parental involvement by increasing contextual reading, improving word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension for students.

Another aim was to enhance parents' ideas of the roles of the teachers and process. Within the program, parents were given short texts, based on their content and reading levels. The time frame for this activity was 10 to 15 minutes each day at their convenience. As parent and child sat together, the parent read text to the child several times while pointing to each word until the child became familiar with the reading text. Discussion of the content followed and paired reading occurred until the child felt comfortable to read the text alone. Parents provided support as needed as the child read

the text several times. Next, both the parent and the child picked some interesting words from the story and made vocabulary cards to be used with word games, sentence building, and word practice.

Progress was documented through a daily log. Daily reading to children was encouraged with writing activities. Before parents began this program, they completed a 90 minute demonstration and received references and resource materials. Support for the parents included several training sessions and one-on-one consultations by phone or in person. Monthly newsletters extended the activities with additional information. Student reading log sheets were monitored by the teachers and provide assistance to those who were having difficulty. At the end of the program, parents provided feedback by sharing their views of the program. Additional information was given to continue parental involvement in their children's education.

Results indicated that children in the Fast Start Study showed a greater improvement in reading than those children not involved in the program. The students' level of growth in reading, word recognition, and reading fluency was directly correlated with their parents' involvement in the program. Given that these results were highly interdependent with parental involvement is inspiring because of the fact that the time frame of this program was five weeks, and students' participating in the study showed delay in their development of reading. Thus, research was provided showing steady evidence that parent's involvement in their child's education has positive results on their learning.

Providing students with a variety of appropriate high interest books, and allowing students time to read are essential for their academic growth (Leighton, 1991). Leighton

developed an individualized reading program called "saturation reading" which provided a reading laboratory for the students. These students were given time to read in a comfortable quiet atmosphere where everyone was reading. This reading program developed positive habits, attitudes, and abilities, which would affect their lives as adult readers.

Another program that was included in the Success for All (SFA), a program that is making the transition from local pilot to national model. One method that is used in Success for All is the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) which is a comprehensive approach to instruction in reading, composition, and spelling. In CIRC Reading, students in grades 1-3 are instructed in reading groups and then assigned to combined ability teams to work on a series of cooperative activities, with the addition of partner reading, making predictions, identifying of characters, settings, problems and problem solutions, summarization, vocabulary, spelling, reading comprehension exercises, and story-related writing (Success for All Foundation, 2000). The longer a school is in the program, the better the outcome on the reading performance of students in all grades (Slavin, Madden, et al., 1994).

Teachers also need to read to their students on a daily basis. In doing so, the student's eyes will be open to a world of reading and this reveals the teachers as positive role models (Dreher, 1998). Besides providing students time and materials to read, it is also important to have them keep a log or journal about the materials that they have read. This strategy provides the students a time to reflect on their reading habits and provides a sense of accomplishment for the students.

Another strategy that has been used is having students read one-third of a story. As designed by Frenier (1996), students become self-directed in learning by reading a third of a story. The students then fill out one-third of the report where they describe basic information about the story and discuss what they have discovered about the material they read. By using their imaginations, they can predict how they think the story will end. This motivates children to find out how the story really ends. Other strategies that have been used for gaining students' involvement and participation is videotaping stories being read, role playing, 25 word précis, double-entry notebook, different endings, and integrating the curriculum (Weisz, 1991).

Incorporating everyday community resources into the classroom also benefits student motivation to read. Hands-on resources could include having a school newspaper where children act as the reporters, or having a variety of stores, small businesses, and other community services in the classroom (Walker & Yekovich, 1999). Having community workers come into the classroom and share their experiences and explain how reading is crucial for their job skills could serve as follow-up activities to improve student reading (Zeigler, 2001).

According to DeBruyn (2001) if we use and build on what is working for us, we can be sure schools will keep improving. But we also must remain constantly engaged in a search for new and more effective techniques and approaches to improve learning and be willing to let go of what is not working. (p.3)

The research intervention text was selected to work in the four target elementary and secondary schools. This plan was selected and implemented to last for 16 weeks to

establish reading and implementation strategies to increase parental involvement in motivating students to read.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of establishing a positive learning environment conducive to reading, provided by the teachers during the period from September 2001 through January 2002, the targeted elementary and secondary students will increase their reading achievement as measured by teachers' observation checklists, student surveys, student reading grades, and student journaling.

In order to accomplish this objective, the following processes were necessary:

1. Develop a series of ready activities that encompass self-motivation, and the enjoyment of reading.
2. Provide a collection of appropriate high interest reading materials.
3. Design an allotted time frame for independent/partner reading.

Project Action Plan

The following action plan was designed to implement two major solution components: establish an environment conducive to reading and implement strategies to increase parental involvement. The improvement sought as a result of the implementation plan is increased reading motivation for elementary and secondary students.

Week 1 I. Introduction

A. Send home the first monthly newsletter/parent contract.

B. Have student's complete reading survey.

C. Class discussion of the importance of reading and what will be expected of them during the course of the year.

D. Students complete pre-assessment activity.

Week 2-15 II. Initial Intervention—Daily teacher read-aloud stories

A. Model and encourage an environment that is conducive to reading.

1. Provide an abundant supply of appropriate high interest books.

2. Provide the opportunity for the students to be comfortable while reading (soothing music, pillows, rugs, chairs).

B. Send home weekly reading logs to be signed daily by parent/ guardian to justify that reading has been done at home.

C. Provide independent/partner reading during the allotted time specified by the teacher.

D. Teacher observation of student reading skills using the observation checklist.

E. Implement incentive plan:

1. Book-It (A program that encourages students to read offered by Pizza Hut.
2. Teachers' gave positive reinforces for fulfilling reading log assignments.
3. Rewards for those students who meet their individual goals defined by the teacher.

F. Analyze student-reading grades.

G. Complete weekly journals based on reading assignments.

H. Parent/Teacher Conferences to discuss reading activities to be done in and out of school and to discuss student progress.

1. September/October-Open House
2. October/November-Report Card Day

I. Continue to send home teacher-made monthly newsletters to inform parents/guardians about activities happening in the classroom and possible upcoming events.

Week 16 III. Conclusion to Intervention

A. Conclusion to Intervention

B. Have student's complete post-assessment activity.

C. Class discussion of the importance of continuing to read, and the benefits that it will bring them.

Methods of Assessment

In order to try to determine the effects of the intervention, teacher records will keep track of reading logs, grades, journals, participation, and parent involvement. Student work is an important part of the data and will be kept to provide an insight to any changes of student attitudes towards reading. The quality of their reading work will reflect any changes throughout the intervention.

To evaluate whether the interventions, increased the students' motivational level, the following assessments were utilized, observational checklist, student reading survey, and reading assessment. The observation checklist was used to see if students could follow written text, stay on task during reading, have their weekly reading logs signed by parents, check on their participation during reading, and to see if their journals had been completed. The student reading survey was used at the beginning of the intervention to see if students enjoyed reading, had access to a library card, thought books were important, had someone to read to them. The reading assessment form was to see if the students could recall the name of the story, characters, were the story took place, what the author was trying to say, and to ask what was their favorite part of the story.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The project objective was to improve academic growth through motivating to primary and secondary students to read. The action plan was used to establish on environment conducive to reading. The use of reading strategies and parental involvement were also targeted in the action plan. To achieve this objective, a three-part action plan was implemented. First, a survey was administered to determine the targeted students' attitudes about reading before and after the project. Second, a reading assessment was distributed to assess students' reading skills and to provide data of any increase in achievement after the completion of the research project. Third, a student observation checklist was used by teachers to check various reading skills of the targeted students. This observation checklist was used at the beginning and at the end of the action research.

The first part of the action plan was to collect data to provide evidence of the existence of the problem. In the first month of school, the targeted students were surveyed by the teachers (Appendix A). The purpose of this survey was to determine the students' perception of reading. Next, a reading assessment was given to assess the targeted students' reading skills before the research project (Appendix B). The third part

of the action plan included a student observation checklist used by teachers that monitored the following reading skills: following written text, on-task during reading, weekly reading logs signed, participation during reading, and completion of journals (Appendix D).

The first intervention was designed to increase the targeted students' interest in reading materials. Through different activities, the students learned how to be self-motivated and how to experience the enjoyment of reading. Adult participation in these reading activities was a major component of the action plan.

Another intervention to provided a collection of appropriate high interest reading materials. An example of this intervention was lending libraries with high interest books located in each of the classrooms. Each day the targeted students had the opportunity to read books prepared by the classroom teacher. These lending libraries not only provided students with books, but provided experience necessary for using a library. These experiences were very beneficial because many of the targeted students had never had the opportunity to visit or use a public library.

The targeted students were often engaged in silent reading and partner reading throughout the day. The students were encouraged by the teachers to spend time reading at home. Reading logs made by the teachers were used to monitor how much time was spent reading at home. The students were required to share this reading experience with an adult. The adult was then required to sign the reading log to verify reading activity.

Several incentives were used by the teachers to encourage student involvement in reading. National Reading Incentive Programs such as Pizza Huts, "Book It" Program and the Six Flags "600 Minute Reading Club" were used to help students meet the

reading goals established by the teachers. Various other incentives were used by the teachers to help motivate the students. These incentives included free homework coupons, stickers, treasure chest prizes, reader of the day, and verbal praises.

Monthly newsletters, designed by the teachers, were sent home to communicate the various reading activities taking place in school. Reading was the main focus of these newsletters. Suggestions and reminders about the importance of reading were stressed in these newsletters.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to determine any improvement in increasing academic growth through motivating students to read, a presurvey and postsurvey (Appendix A) were given to primary and secondary students. The results of the presurvey indicated that a majority of students answered "yes" to most of the questions about reading. The postsurvey indicated that the students' view of reading was not greatly affected. Although most of the results of the postsurvey were higher, there was only a slight increase in the postsurvey results. There was a slight increase in the enjoyment of reading, the use of library cards, comprehension of reading materials, and the availability of books. This slight increase indicated that the interventions may have affected some of the targeted students in a positive way. Judging by the results of the presurvey and postsurveys of the targeted students, the researchers discovered that some of these students were more motivated to read to increase academic achievement. The results of the presurvey and postsurvey are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Percentage of Positive Responses Given by Students by the PreSurvey and PostSurvey

Questions	PreSurvey	PostSurvey	Change
Enjoys Reading	72	73	+
Is Reading Easy	51	58	+
Library Card	49	58	+
Use of Public Library	51	51	0
Are Books Important	76	76	0
Special Time for Reading	67	65	-
Comprehend Material	60	65	+
Remember What Someone Read To You	76	77	+
Are Books Available	69	70	+
Improvement of Reading in Past Year	67	69	+

n = 130 total students

As illustrated in Table 3, some of the targeted students felt more confident about reading. After analyzing the data, the researchers discovered that over 50% of students answered yes to the above survey questions.

Another important aspect of the research was a student observation checklist (Appendix B). A preobservation checklist and postobservation checklist was completed by the teachers to record the targeted reading skills of the students. The results indicated that less than 48% of the students frequently mastered most of the targeted reading skills. The student post observation checklist indicated that all of the targeted skills, except for "getting the weekly reading logs signed", improved throughout the intervention. In the

prestudent observation checklist, 63% of the students had their reading logs signed, and only 58% of the students had their reading logs signed in the poststudent observation checklist. Researchers concluded that the lack of improvement in getting weekly reading logs signed was due to a lack of parental involvement. The preobservation checklist and student postobservation checklist results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

A Comparison of Student Preobservation and Student Postobservation Checklist

Targeted Skills	Preobservation	Postobservation	Change
Follows written text	48%	68%	+
On-task during reading	42%	48%	+
Weekly reading logs signed	63%	58%	–
Participation during reading	45%	58%	+
Completion of journals	51%	56%	+

n = 130 total students

In order to discover whether the targeted students reading skills improved throughout the intervention, the researchers analyzed the results of the preassessment and postassessment (Appendix C) given to these students. Results indicated that 70% of the students scored 50% or above on the preassessment, and 81% of the students scored 50% or above on the postassessment. Judging by the results of the preassessment and postassessment, the students had a better understanding of the given reading material.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of data, the students demonstrated a slight improvement in their enjoyment of reading, acquiring library cards, understanding what

they read, having someone to read to them or being read to, and finding books available through the lending libraries.

Although improvements were noted in these areas, the researchers concluded that these improvements were limited due to a lack of consistent parental involvement. The researchers also noted that they were uncertain whether the students were actually doing the reading or if the parents were signing off on the reading so that their child would receive the incentives that were offered. The researchers reached this conclusion because a number of students reported to the researchers that their parents signed the reading logs without them reading there reading logs were presigned for the week, and many parents complained about their lack of time to spend reading with their children because of their busy schedules. Reading is a fundamental skill in life and should be modeled and encouraged at home. It seems apparent that this did not always happen in all homes. This lack of involvement may affect the students in their academic lives.

Even though improvements throughout the data collection, the researchers noted that the parents were not as involved as much as they should have been throughout the process. The motivation of students is greatly affected by the support at home.

In order to improve the academic growth through reading for students, the researchers would change how they would get the parents involved. Researchers would try to get the parents to understand how important reading was for their child, through workshops and parent/family reading nights offered several times a year at the school. At these workshops and reading nights, proper readi[illegible]echniques and suggestions for reading would be modeled for them by the teachers. Videos and lists of reading resources could also be offered at this time. Teachers could also for parent volunteers to

come to the classroom once a month to read to the class to improve motivation in reading. Parents may gain a better understanding of the importance of reading and how it affects their child's academic growth by participating in these activities. Everyone needs to work together to help promote the importance of reading.

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Appendix A

STUDENT READING SURVEY

1. Do you enjoy reading?	Yes	No
2. Is reading easy for you?	Yes	No
3. Do you have a library card?	Yes	No
4. Do you use the public library?	Yes	No
5. Do you think books are important?	Yes	No
6. Is there a time of day that you enjoy reading?	Yes	No
7. Do you remember what you have read?	Yes	No
8. Do you remember a time when you enjoyed having someone read to you?	Yes	No
9. Do you always have a book to read?	Yes	No
10. Do you think you have become a better reader? in the past year?	Yes	No

Appendix B

INDIVIDUAL STORY CONFERENCE FORM

Name _____ Date _____

Teacher _____ School _____

Questions for Individual Story Retelling

1. Recall the name of the story.

_____

2. Recall the characters.

_____

3. Who is/are the main character(s)?

_____

4. Where does the story take place?

_____

5. What is the author trying to say?

_____

6. What is your favorite part of the story?

_____

Appendix C

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Teacher: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Target Skills: _____

Ratings:
✚ = Frequently
✓ = Sometimes
ↄ = Not Yet

NAMES OF STUDENTS	Following written text	On task during reading	Weekly Reading logs signed	Participation during reading	Completion of journals	COMMENTS
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						
16.						
17.						
18.						
19.						